

Aussies shine at the World Skeet Championships



Nothing beats turning into the National Gun Club at San Antonio, the Mecca of the Skeet world. Your heart races and the anticipation of nearly 2 weeks of Skeet competition with the best in the world is incredibly exciting. Over 860 competitors from all over the world converged at the 2016 World Championships making it a truly a global event in the Skeet world.

From an Australian perspective we were very fortunate this year to send a 5 person Australian team to compete at these Championships. The team was Craig O'Neill, David O Sullivan, Eddie Elder, Hayden Mountjoy and Glenn Clarke. It's important to understand the back story is that to get a spot in the Australian Team to compete at World Championships is nearly a 2 year journey in its own right.

Skeet in Australia has grown in popularity in the last several years. Many initiatives have been introduced and have paid dividends in terms of huge increase of attendance at our State titles and Nationals, a consistent framework for team selection and a healthy pursuit of Hall of Fame points by many shooters.

In terms of team selection shooters must attend at least 2 State titles plus our National Championships (many shooters compete in more events but this is the minimum requirement). The best two scores from the 100 target State title events plus the score from the 450 targets at the Nationals a score out of 650 from which the team is selected. This process ensures that performance consistency is a key factor in sending a team overseas which is paramount.

Why is this so important you may ask? Any shooter who has sat on a plane for 20 or so hours and landed at the other side of the world in a different time

and temperature zone will know what a shock to the system that is. Coupled with limited local knowledge and potentially different processes and shooting conditions really need experience in order to not only cope but to perform at the highest level in these circumstances.

The Australians planned carefully to ensure they could familiarise themselves and get over the jet lag and most were in San Antonio early in the week preceding the World Championships. This gave plenty of time to get used to the heat and humidity and bright light conditions experienced in a Texas Summer. The NSSA did everything they could to make the international visitors welcome and our Australian flag was on display at the stadium field the entire two weeks of competition.

Registration for individuals and the team events commenced on the Wednesday and practice also started on the Wednesday and the Thursday before the Mini World competition started. One of the important shooting elements to practise was shooting doubles under lights at night which is something that we don't do here in Australia. On Thursday night the club was open till 10 pm to ensure shooters got practise shooting under lights on the top fields.

Top of the Hill at the National Grounds San Antonio Texas



Australian Team at the Hall of Fame dinner





Mal Briggs Runner up Mini World 20 Gauge



Australian skeet Team World Championships 2016

the targets under your belt in preparation for the World Championships.

Some notable performances from the Mini World was Eddie Elder and Mal Briggs had 100 straights in the 28 gauge on Saturday and on Sunday the Australians started to shine with 100 straights in the 20 gauge event from Mal Briggs, Benn Baker, Glenn Clarke, Dave O Sullivan, Craig O'Neill.

Mal Briggs was able to shoot a full box of doubles after the event to grant him access to the stadium field with 5 others who made the cut. Mal proudly shot off under lights until it was down to him and multiple World Champion LP Giambrione and after a long shoot off Mal ended runner up in the 20 gauge Mini World. The crowd support from the Australians actively watching the shoot off in the stadium was amazing as the cheers were very loud in support for Mal.

Of special note 2016 was the inaugural Wayne Mayes World Championship event and one designed to promote team shooting. 100 targets is shot as per a COC event with 25 of each gauge starting with the 12 and ending with the 410. All competitors were randomly assigned a 3 person team via a computer with all grades represented via a handicap system. This made for exciting times as just like our handicap events in Australia it gave the lower graded shooters a chance to shoot with the big names for a real World championship. The prizes were to be awarded at the Hall of Fame dinner on the Monday evening. Of note the NCSA is really trying to increase the prevalence of team shooting and this event promotes small gauge and handicap and team shooting in the best possible way which is a fitting tribute to Wayne Mayes arguably the world's best ever skeet shooter and true all around sportsperson for our sport.

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Eddy Elder shooting Doubles under lights

The preliminary event is the Mini World Championships which is run over three days 100 targets of each gauge + a doubles event on Friday. 500 targets in a weekend is a bit of a shock to the system but it really gets

Aussie Team and USA Team

